

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2020

Mr. Michael Carvajal
Director
Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First St., NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Carvajal:

We were recently informed of the Bureau's decision to close the D. Ray James Correctional Facility in September 2020. We are deeply concerned about the repercussions of this closure that will result in the loss of nearly 350 jobs for the rural communities surrounding it during one of the most economically challenging times our country has experienced in a century.

Through an effective public-private partnership, this facility has consistently provided the BOP with superior performance, and, more recently, it has been a shining example in the federal prison system on how to best manage the COVID-19 health pandemic. From the outset of the crisis, this facility has taken proactive and appropriate measures. This has resulted in very limited exposure of inmates and staff, which has benefitted all those at the facility, as well as the local communities in Georgia and Florida.

Since the inmate population consists exclusively of criminal aliens, we know that early release for them is not an option. As you well know, prisons have been considered "hot spots" for the virus in communities throughout the country. Therefore, it is troubling to hear the proposal to transfer these inmates and compress already stressed BOP facilities during a time when public health experts are promoting social distancing in order to better mitigate the spread of the virus. Social distancing measures are even more necessary to prevent the spread in confined environments such as nursing homes and prisons. As such, it would appear that adding individuals to currently populated BOP facilities would be counterproductive.

We also know from your own cost data analysis that the D. Ray James facility provides a significant cost savings for taxpayers - approximately 30% - as compared to low security facilities managed directly by the agency. Therefore, phasing out a high-quality, cost-effective facility that will create significant job losses and likely result in furthering the public health crisis appears to be a very shortsighted decision.

For the benefit of the employees working at the facility, as well as the health and safety of those inmates currently residing there, we are requesting that you reconsider this directive and postpone the closure of the facility until these issues can be sufficiently addressed and until we have more clarity about the ongoing impacts of the health pandemic in prison settings.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Doug Collins
Member of Congress



Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator